

Land at Millfields Farm, Rusper

Employment and Vitality Assessment

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Appendix A: Marketing Brochures

1. Introduction

1.1 Millfields Farm, Rusper ("the Site") is located on the south-eastern edge of Rusper, within the administrative area of Horsham District Council.

1.2 Rusper is a small settlement currently classified as a 'Smaller Village' within the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), which reflects the range of services and facilities available within proximity to the Site and to the village more broadly. Within Rusper, available services and facilities include:

- St Mary Magdalene Church;
- Rusper Village Hall;
- Rusper Primary School;
- Rusper Stores & Post Office;
- Food and beverage venues;
- Local commercial businesses;
- Two pubs (The Plough & Attic Rooms and The Star Inn);
- Rusper Sports Club; and
- Public Children's Playground.

1.3 The Site was historically used as an equestrian stud farm until the use was vacated due to commercial failure. Numerous applications have been made to change the use of the property to Class B uses with a greater chance of commercial success. However, those applications were all refused with the exception of a temporary change of use to car storage, because of concerns over an increase in movement of large commercial vehicles as well as concerns over amenity impacts to the residential community. As a result, the buildings have struggled to provide commercially viable employment space over recent years. The Site's current lawful use is sui generis.

1.4 The purpose of this assessment is twofold. Firstly, it will set out how the Site is unsuitable for employment uses and is therefore a prime site to deliver much needed market and affordable housing. Secondly, it will demonstrate the extent to which a residential development at the Site could help to maintain the vitality and viability of the existing services located within Rusper, thereby providing tangible planning benefits which weigh significantly in favour of the planning application.

1.5 The assessment will review the impact of the Proposed Development on the vitality of the village against the following headings:

- Population;
- Education;
- Retail services;
- Community services;
- Open spaces; and
- Economic benefits.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (December 2023) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they should be applied to both plan-making and decision-making. At the centre of the NPPF is the principle of sustainable development.
- 2.2 **Paragraph 8** describes the three overarching objectives to sustainable development. These are as follows:
- **Economic objective** - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - **Social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **Environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 2.3 **Paragraph 60** highlights the Government’s desire to boost the supply of homes, noting that it is important that a sufficient amount of land can come forward where it is needed, supporting the principle of sustainable development.
- 2.4 **Section 6** of the NPPF provides guidance on ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’. Under this section, **Paragraph 85** provides that ‘significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development’.
- 2.5 National policy, therefore, recognises the importance of building a strong economy which also develops strong and vibrant communities. This is echoed at **Paragraph 83** in respect of rural communities, which directs housing to locations which would enhance or maintain the vitality of these rural communities.

Horsham District Planning Framework

- 2.6 The Horsham District Planning Framework (“HDPF”) (2015) is the overarching planning document for Horsham District outside the South Downs National Park. One of the six priority themes identified in the HDPF is ‘Economic Development: Plan for a successful local economy with high levels of employment’.
- 2.7 The **vision** for the HDPF is:
- “A dynamic district where people care and where individuals from all backgrounds can get involved in their communities and share the benefits of a district that enjoys a high quality of life”.*
- 2.8 **Policy 1** seeks to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of in the area.

- 2.9 Point 9 of **Policy 2** seeks to ‘identify existing sites of important employment use, and to safeguard their function through flexible policies and designation of Key Employment Areas, together with supporting the rural economy, to allow people the opportunity to work close to where they live’.
- 2.10 **Policy 3** of the HDPF defines the Rusper settlement as a ‘Smaller Village’, where residents are reliant on larger settlements to access most of their requirements.
- 2.11 **Policy 4** provides that the growth of settlements across the District will continue to be supported in order to meet identified local housing, employment and community needs. This includes development that will assist the retention and enhancement of community facilities.
- 2.12 **Policy 9** relates to Employment Development and seeks to balance the need to ensure protection of valued employment and commercial sites, whilst enabling sites which are no longer economically viable to be considered for other appropriate uses. Point 2 of Policy 9 requires that:

“Redevelopment of employment sites and premises outside Key Employment Areas, must demonstrate that the site/premises is no longer needed and/or viable for employment use”.

- 2.13 **Policy 10** provides that development in the countryside which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity, will be supported in principle.

Rusper Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031

- 2.14 The Rusper Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (“RNP”) has the following **vision**:

“Value, protect and promote the unique rural parish of Rusper, by respecting its heritage, appreciating its current community, protecting its environment and being aspirational when planning its future and therefore ensuring Rusper remains safe and sustainable for people, wildlife and the environment generally”.

- 2.15 Further to this, **Policy RUS2** also notes that proposals that will result in the loss of employment floor-space will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that either there will be an increase in jobs as a result of the proposals enabling a higher employment density to be achieved, or the use is no longer viable.

Emerging Policy: Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040

- 2.16 Regulation 19 of the Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (“emerging Local Plan”) was released for consultation on 19 January 2024. The emerging Local Plan covers the period to 2040, though considers a longer term context of up to 30 years for strategic scale development. The emerging Local Plan aims to deliver the social, economic and environmental needs of Horsham District, as well considering the extent to which needs beyond our boundaries can be met.

- 2.17 The **vision** of the new Local Plan is:

“A place where people from all backgrounds can choose to live and work, in a high-quality natural environment and low carbon economy with access to high quality jobs, services and facilities and green spaces that are close to home.”

Policy Summary

- 2.18 Planning policy at both a National and local level encourages development that will result in a positive economic, social and environmental impact within its locality. In order to support the principles of sustainable development, a well-functioning economy is required to support a local community, and conversely, a residential community of a suitable size is required to build a strong and competitive economy. With this in mind, planning policy encourages development opportunities that provide housing in locations that would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities to help build a strong economy and develop vibrant communities.

3. The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposals involve the demolition of the existing buildings and structures and removal of associated hardstanding and the redevelopment of the Site to provide a residential development of 43 no. new dwellings, of which a minimum of 50% will be affordable.
- 3.2 The scheme will also deliver associated soft landscaping and planting, public realm and open space and children's play space. This is a key focal point of the development which has been designed to ensure that dwellings face outwards onto green spaces to enhance future residents' connection to nature.
- 3.3 Primary vehicular access is proposed to be taken from East Street, with secondary emergency access from Horsham Road. The public footpaths crossing the site providing access to the countryside beyond will be retained, with one of the footpaths proposed to be diverted to run through the proposed open space area for increased pedestrian amenity.
- 3.4 The objective of the proposals is to create a landscape-led development that re-uses previously developed land to provide high-quality new homes in a sustainable, edge-of-settlement location that is both physically and visually connected to Rusper through existing public rights of way and a design that responds to the local vernacular.

4. Loss of Employment Use

Planning History

- 4.1 There have been multiple planning applications on the Site over the years relating to the permitted use of the Site in terms of its historic equestrian use during the 1980s and more recently in relation to residential redevelopment of the Site.
- 4.2 In the mid-1990s, the lawful use remained as equestrian (sui generis). In the mid to late 2000s, an application to convert the stables into Class B1 units and the riding school for Class B8 uses was dismissed at appeal.
- 4.3 Since then, there have been numerous further applications to change the use of the property to Class B uses, however these have all been refused with the exception of a temporary change of use from sui generis to a vintage car storage use (Use Class B8) for a period of two years (LPA ref. DC/20/1794). The prospective car storage tenant was never able to take up the lease for this use due to financial and viability concerns and this temporary use has now ceased.
- 4.4 There was also an enforcement case (EN/21/0472) which was against car storage, and furniture restoration business operating without the correct planning permission in breach of Enforcement Notice EN/12/0310. The Enforcement Notice was issued due to the material change of use of the land and buildings without planning permission for B1, B2 and B8 uses.
- 4.5 It was considered that the change of use was in conflict with the development plan and concerns were raised over uncontrolled and unacceptable impacts on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.
- 4.6 The Council has been reluctant to permit the change of use, with concerns raised over the increase in traffic from large vehicles and the harm to neighbouring amenity resulting from the intensification of the commercial use on-site.
- 4.7 In the Inspector's appeal decision following the 2007 application, concerns were raised about the increased presence of HGVs along the track from Horsham Road and the noise and disturbance caused by the manoeuvring, parking and un/loading of vehicles to serve the B1 and B8 uses, alongside the increased trip generation which would be caused. This was echoed in the 2011 application which was also dismissed at appeal.
- 4.8 An extensive (but not exhaustive) list of the Site's planning history is provided at the table below.

Table 4.8.1 Planning history of the Site

LPA ref.	Description	Decision
DC/07/0296 Appeal ref: APP/Z3825/A/07/2060520	Conversion of former stables complex into 14 separate small Class B1 units, together with the conversion of former indoor riding school for Class B8 uses, parking and landscaping.	Non-determination and appeal dismissed 30 October 2008.
DC/09/1492	Change of use of buildings to mixed use of workshops, long term storage and equestrian and 2-bed flat.	Application withdrawn 24 January 2011.
DC/11/2586 Appeal ref: APP/Z3825/A/12/2183140	Retention of change of use of buildings 1, 2, 3 (A and B) and 4 for B1 (Business) and B8 (1) (Storage and Distribution) uses for a 2 year period and including a roller shutter door on Building 4.	Application refused, appeal dismissed 21 January 2013.

DC/13/1103	To retain the use of building 4 as B8 use for long term storage only, together with 3 car parking spaces for a temporary period of 2 years and the erection of post and rail fence on southern boundary.	Refused.
DC/15/1736	Demolition of existing dwellings and buildings and erection of 42 new dwellings with associated landscaping, open space and access	Refused 4 November 2015.
DC/15/2857	Demolition of existing dwellings and vacant buildings, and erection of 29 new dwellings with associated landscaping, open space and access (Outline).	Refused 7 July 2016. Appeal dismissed 14 July 2017.
DC/20/1794	Temporary change of use of part of Building No.4 from an equestrian livery (Sui Generis) to a vintage car storage use (Use Class B8) for a period of two years.	Granted 26 November 2020.

Current state of buildings on site

- 4.9 The Site currently comprises four buildings located within the Site's south-western extent.
- 4.10 Given the age of the existing buildings and given that they have not been fully utilised for a number of years, they have fallen into varying states of disrepair. Of note, a timber barn located to the north-east of the stable block is in very poor condition, currently being held together with acrow props and timber planks.
- 4.11 The northern-most barn is of timber and block construction with a pitched roof. This barn is in poor condition and is likely to be beyond economic repair. It is unstable and the dangerous barn roof structure has been flagged by the Sussex Building Control as being in need of repair. This repair has now been carried out, although the building is still in poor condition.
- 4.12 The main (southern-most) barn is a detached unit with a steel frame construction, erected approximately 20 years ago. It has profile clad elevations and a pitched roof.
- 4.13 The stable block (located immediately north of the main barn) comprises a number of individual stables and loose boxes, along with a one bedroom grooms flat which is currently vacant.
- 4.14 A significant level of investment would be required in order to bring the buildings up to standard, which would further impact the economic viability of the Site. However, as demonstrated in this Assessment, there is little appetite from prospective tenants to occupy the buildings and the Council has been clear that an intensification of commercial uses on the Site is not acceptable in planning terms, further narrowing the pool of potential users.
- 4.15 Photographs provided at 0 illustrate the conditions of the existing buildings on the Site.

Figure 4.15 Photos of Existing Buildings



Marketing of Site

- 4.16 There have been multiple attempts made by the owner over the years to make the equestrian farm work commercially, however, there has been no demand for a livery of the scale required to make it viable.
- 4.17 Conversations with agents for commercial agreements commenced in 2017 and gained more traction in 2020.
- 4.18 Between 2017 and 2019, two tenants expressed interest in marketing the Site on a commercial basis. However, there were significant financial costs involved with meeting the agents' recommendations and tenant demands for power and renovation in order to bring the buildings up to an acceptable standard. The tenant interest was not strong enough to justify the financial investment, so the commercial lease did not eventuate.
- 4.19 The Site was marketed in May 2020 to let for 'low cost farm units', seeking a simple tenancy agreement for a minimum term of 12 months. In response to this marketing promotion, the following responses were received:
- Interest was expressed for the lease of Building 1 (Timber Barn), for the storage and distribution of dried Italian foods. However, this was later dismissed as the prospective tenant felt the building was too rustic for the intended purpose.
 - A lease was secured for a small business occupying Building 1 (Timber Barn) for approximately six months, however, the business collapsed, and rent was not paid.
 - A building manufacturing company (United Modern Living Concept Ltd (UMLC)) expressed interest in letting Building 1 (Timber Barn), for the storage of marble and stone. UMLC did not follow-through with their expression of interest.
 - A construction company (Intersign Partitions) leased Building 3 (the Old Stables) for a minimum term of 2 years. The business operated for a period of approximately 1 year, until they were required to cease operation due to a planning enforcement notice being issued.
 - A car storage and detailing business (J Developments) expressed interest in letting Building 4 (Steel Framed Warehouse) on a 2-year term. J Developments retracted their offer prior to signing the lease due to financial and viability concerns, despite temporary planning permission being issued for car storage.
 - Some other interest was expressed to lease the Site between early-to mid-2020, however, interested parties generally found the Site to be unsuitable due to concerns with access for HGVs, hours of use, and planning matters.

- 4.20 In late-2020, Building 4 (steel framed warehouse) was marketed to let as a commercial tenancy for a term of 2 years, for the use as a car storage warehouse following temporary planning permission being issued. In response to this marketing promotion, a waste management and recycling specialist (UBH Group) expressed interest in letting Building 4 for car storage, however, the prospective letting did not eventuate.
- 4.21 The two marketing brochures are provided at **Appendix A** of this report.
- 4.22 In summary, over the years since conversations started in 2017 with agents, only two commercial lettings went through (Building 1 and Building 3). Each lasted approximately a year before the businesses either collapsed or planning enforcement resulted in forced closure.
- 4.23 In recent years, the buildings have remained challenging to lease based on the lack of viable uses. One of the existing buildings (Building 3) was leased for the use as a dog training centre. At the commencement of the lease, the tenant was interested in Building 4, however, the tenants hope to expand the business did not materialise and the building was not let. Since the COVID pandemic the business owners, who lease the adjoining Millfields Farm Cottage, have found business more challenging. The site is currently being used for private livery purposes, which provides no employment, as a result of the lack of viable employment opportunities.

Conclusions

- 4.24 This assessment has demonstrated that the Site is not suited to employment uses, which has been verified through the numerous unsuccessful attempts to secure tenants, as well as the reluctance from the Council to change the use of the property to Class B uses.
- 4.25 However, given the Site's proximity to the Rusper Village centre, it is well positioned to be developed for a use that would enhance the vitality and viability of existing services within the settlement.
- 4.26 As such, and as supported through this assessment, we are of the view residential accommodation in the form of market and affordable housing would be the most suitable and viable option for the Site.

5. Vitality Assessment

- 5.1 The purpose of this vitality assessment is to demonstrate how the Proposed Development can contribute to the vitality and viability of the existing services located within Rusper. In line with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF, the Proposed Development will meet the economic, social and environmental objectives and needs of the local area, which are discussed in this section.

Population

- 5.2 The village of Rusper is located within the Output Areas of E00161535 and E00161536. According to Census 2021 data, the areas combined have a population of 670 people, living in 260 households.
- 5.3 The table below details the age profile of people living in Rusper, in comparison to Horsham District and England as a whole. As can be seen in the table below, there are no clearly identifiable population trends in Rusper. Although the proportion of children under four years is equivalent to national averages, there is a smaller proportion of children aged between five and 14. There are fewer young adults (between 20 and 44 years) when compared to national averages. The biggest population group is older adults (those between 50 and 79 years), which accounts for 42.4% of the total population. However, the population of those over 80 is well below district and national averages.

Table 5.3.1 Age profile

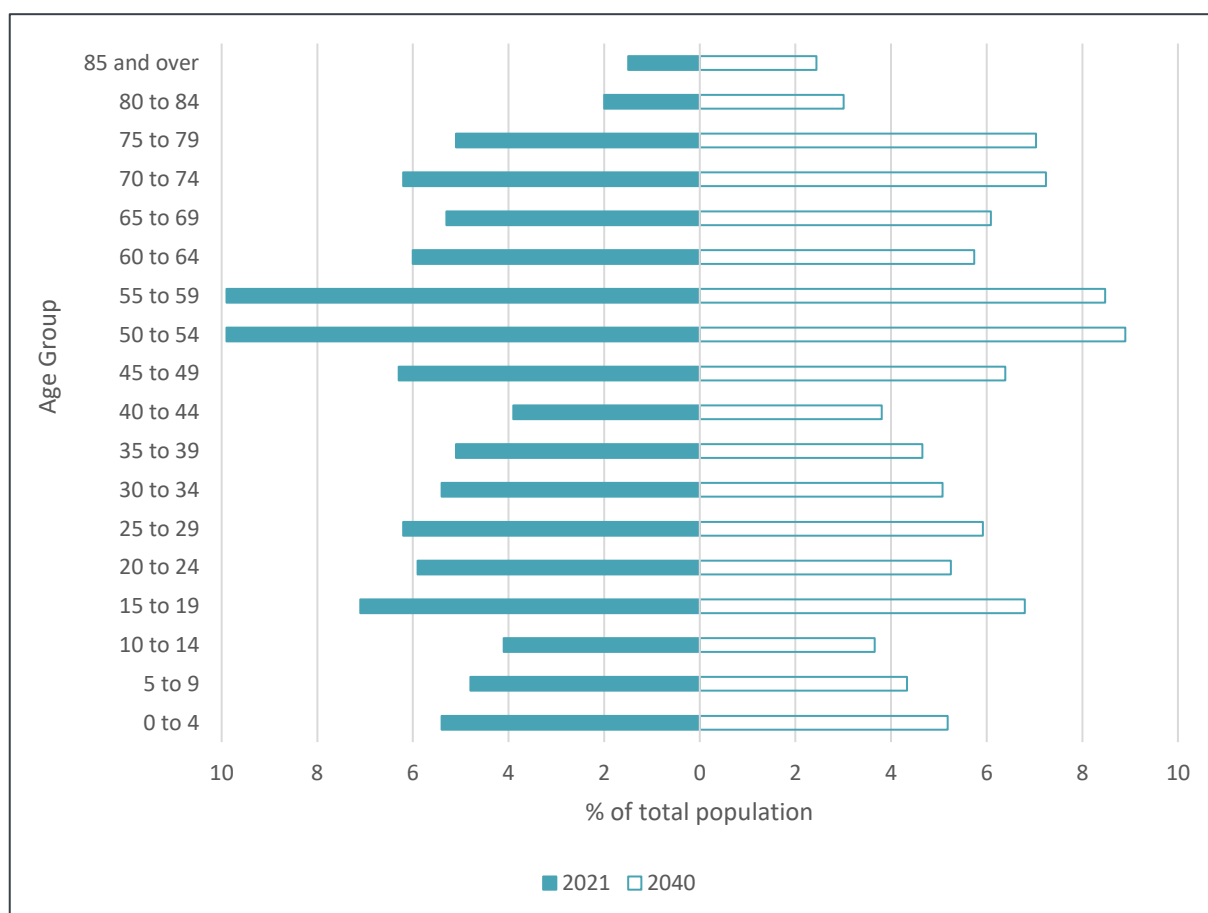
	Rusper	Horsham	England
Aged 0 to 4	5.4%	5.0%	5.4%
Aged 5 to 9	4.8%	5.5%	5.9%
Aged 10 to 14	4.1%	6.1%	6.0%
Aged 15 to 19	7.1%	5.2%	5.7%
Aged 20 to 24	5.9%	4.2%	6.0%
Aged 25 to 29	6.2%	5.1%	6.6%
Aged 30 to 34	5.4%	5.7%	7.0%
Aged 35 to 39	5.1%	5.9%	6.7%
Aged 40 to 44	3.9%	6.1%	6.3%
Aged 45 to 49	6.3%	6.5%	6.4%
Aged 50 to 54	9.9%	7.5%	6.9%
Aged 55 to 59	9.9%	7.7%	6.7%
Aged 60 to 64	6.0%	6.6%	5.8%
Aged 65 to 69	5.3%	5.7%	4.9%
Aged 70 to 74	6.2%	6.1%	5.0%
Aged 75 to 79	5.1%	4.6%	3.6%
Aged 80 to 84	2.0%	3.2%	2.5%
Aged 85 and above	1.5%	3.3%	2.4%

Source: Census 2021

- 5.4 The table above relates to the population profile in Rusper and Horsham as of 2021. We have then applied the 2018-based subnational population projections to understand how the population is expected to change over the Local Plan period. The population of Rusper is expected to grow at a modest rate, from 670 in 2021 to 747 in 2040.

5.5 The figure below illustrates how the population and age structure of Rusper is expected to develop by 2040. As seen, the proportion of people aged 65 and over in Rusper is projected to increase significantly, from 20.1% to 25.8%. The population of children and young people are expected to grow marginally, however, these groups are expected to shrink as a proportion of the overall population. From this, we can conclude that Rusper has an ageing population, which may threaten the vitality of the village in the longer term.

Figure 5.5.1 Population projections, 2021 and 2040



Source: Census 2021 and 2018-based subnational population projections

5.6 The construction of the Proposed Development will increase the existing population of Rusper. The Proposed Development will deliver 43 units, and as such the number of households in Rusper will increase from 260 to 303.

5.7 The Horsham District average household size is 2.35 persons per household. Applying this figure to the 43 proposed dwellings, we calculate that the Proposed Development will add a further 101 people to the village. This would increase the current population of Rusper to 771. As the proposals include a high proportion of affordable dwellings, and a high number of two- and three-bedroom houses, dwellings are more likely to appeal towards first-time buyers and young families and therefore it is expected that new residents will have a younger age profile, helping to address the issue of an ageing population in the village.

Education

- 5.8 There is one education facility located in the village, being Rusper Primary School. The school accommodates children aged four to 11 and is located within 200m of the Proposed Development. It is assumed therefore that any children living at the Proposed Development between the ages of four and 11 will attend this school.
- 5.9 Rusper Primary School has capacity to accommodate 105 pupils. School capacity data is available between 2009/10 and 2021/22 and is summarised in the table below. As seen, the school was over-capacity between 2009 and 2014, but since that time has been under-capacity for the period 2015-2021.

Table 5.9.1 Capacity at Rusper Primary School

School year	School places available	Pupils on roll	% capacity
2009/10	105	111	105.7%
2010/11	105	110	104.8%
2011/12	105	109	103.8%
2012/13	105	105	100.0%
2013/14	105	105	100.0%
2014/15	105	102	97.1%
2015/16	105	99	94.3%
2016/17	105	99	94.3%
2017/18	105	99	94.3%
2018/19	105	101	96.2%
2020/21	105	96	91.4%
2021/22	105	105	100.0%

Source: School capacity data, academic year 2021/22¹

- 5.10 Given the age profile of Rusper, and a projected stagnation or decline in the number of children in the village, it is anticipated that the demand for school places is likely to decrease as a result of demographic trends. Given that schools are funded partly on the basis of the number of children enrolled², a decline in pupil numbers could cause funding issues for the school. It is likely that new residents of the Proposed Development will include children who will require a school place, and as such we have assessed the likely impact of the Proposed Development on the capacity at Rusper Primary School.
- 5.11 WSCC's Section 106: Planning Obligations guide was published in 2023. The document establishes the pupil yield that is expected to arise from new development. The Council exempts affordable dwellings (as it is assumed these households would be moving locally), and one-bedroom properties. Excluding these dwellings, therefore, the Council expects there to be a child product of 25 primary-aged children per 100 dwellings. By applying the product of 0.25 to the 21 eligible dwellings, we can calculate that the Proposed Development will generate a need for an additional five primary school pupil places.
- 5.12 Considering the historic capacity present at Rusper Primary School, it is assumed that the school could comfortably accommodate this new demand. The Proposed Development will therefore benefit Rusper Primary School by introducing new pupils to a school where sustaining healthy pupil levels may be difficult due to an ageing

¹ Department for Education (2023). *School capacity data, academic year 2021/22*

² Department for Education (2023) The national funding formulae for schools and high needs, 2024-25

³ West Sussex County Council (2020). *Section 106: Planning Obligations*

population. Given that schools are funded on the basis of pupil numbers, an increase in the number of pupils will benefit the school as a whole, from a funding perspective.

Retail Services

- 5.13 The existing retail and leisure provision within Rusper is fairly limited, consisting of the Rusper Stores & Post Office, some food and beverage venues, and some dispersed commercial businesses.
- 5.14 Rusper Stores & Post Office is located on East Street and is generally open during common business hours plus weekends until 4:30pm. In addition to a post service, the store also sells daily goods, including fresh and frozen groceries, hot food, and alcohol.
- 5.15 The village has two pubs; The Star Inn is located opposite the Post Office on East Street, and The Plough & Attic Rooms is located approximately 100 metres further north.
- 5.16 It is assumed that residents of the Proposed Development would carry out a level of spending in Rusper, especially on items more commonly purchased closer to home such as everyday shopping and meals/drinks out, and as such provide a boost to the existing retail and leisure services within the village.
- 5.17 Experian expenditure data⁴ indicates that households in the Rusper area have a combined annual convenience spend of £2.06m as of 2024 (2021 prices). Households in Rusper have an individual convenience spend of £7,587 per year, which is 16% higher than the Horsham average of £6,529 per year. Multiplying this £7,587 figure by the 43 households provided at the Proposed Development, we can assume that there will be an additional £326,235 convenience spend per year.
- 5.18 Convenience spend is split into main food and top-up shopping. Main food shopping is considered to be a weekly shop where the majority of food is purchased, whereas top-up shopping includes smaller, more frequent trips to purchase necessities. Given the range of goods available at the Rusper Stores & Post Office, it is assumed that this performs a top-up shopping function, rather than somewhere people would carry out their main food shop. Applying professional judgement, we assume that there is a 75%:25% split between main food and top-up expenditure. Households will therefore have an annual top-up expenditure of £1,897. Multiplying this figure by the number of households at the Proposed Development, we assume that the Proposed Development will generate an additional £81,559 annual top-up shopping expenditure in the village or very nearby.
- 5.19 In terms of leisure spend, Experian expenditure data⁵ shows that households in the Rusper area have a combined annual spend of £1.03m on restaurants, cafes and pubs as of 2024. Individual households in Rusper spend £3,782 (2021 prices) per year, which again is slightly higher than the district average spend of £3,280. It is anticipated, therefore, that the 43 households at the Proposed Development will add an additional £162,631 of spend on restaurants, cafes and pubs, which may be spent in the local area.

Community Services

- 5.20 Rusper Village Hall is located adjacent to the Rusper Primary School along Horsham Road. According to the Village Hall website, the Hall hosts a number of local groups and events including art groups, play groups, Qigong, Pilates,

⁴ Experian AppLibrary (2024). 2022 report.

⁵ Experian AppLibrary (2024). 2022 report.

fitness classes, and Aikido. Committee meetings are also held in the Village Hall. The Village Hall was graded as 'Good' quality according to the 2021 Horsham Community Facilities Assessment⁶.

- 5.21 According to research from Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)⁷, many village halls nationally are closing, due to the lasting consequences of Covid-19 and rising energy bills. Village halls are often reliant on users for funding. The increased population resulting from the Proposed Development is likely to mean an increase in the use of the Village Hall, through attendance at groups and clubs which use the hall for their activities, and/or through private hire, which will improve its financial resilience. As advocated by ACRE, village halls are important centres of community for rural villages, providing meeting places and opportunities to engage in sports or hobbies. As such, their vitality is crucial to the longevity of rural communities.
- 5.22 St Mary Magdalene Church is located towards the northern end of the village along High Street, opposite The Plough & Attic Rooms. In addition to weekly services, the Church hosts occasional community events as well as special personal events, such as weddings, baptisms, christenings, and funerals. The churchyard contains a burial ground. Research from the Church of England shows that nationally, church attendance is declining, particularly since the pandemic⁸. The Proposed Development is likely to increase the use of the church, either through attendance at weekly services, or by using the church to host events.

Open Spaces

- 5.23 Rusper Sports Club is a local sports facility located at the northern end of the village, along High Street. The sports club contains two outdoor tennis courts (one with basketball hoops) and a full-size grass football pitch. The club also contains a pavilion and seating. The football pitch is currently the home to the Horsham Crusaders Football Club, who have nine open aged teams playing in three different leagues on Saturdays and Sundays across Sussex. However, the Horsham Playing Pitch Strategy⁹ notes that there is low demand for adult football at the site, and that football pitches in the area are under-capacity. Data from Sport England's Active Lives Survey¹⁰ shows that approximately 5% of adults participate in football twice a month, and that 38% of children aged between five and 16 participate in football once a week. As such, it is expected that usage of the football pitch, for both adults and children, will increase following occupation of the Proposed Development.
- 5.24 In addition, a public children's playground is located along High Street, north of the Rusper Village Stores & Post Office. Families are unlikely to travel far to use children's play areas, preferring them to be within walking distance. Guidance from the Fields in Trust recommends LEAPs are located within a 400m walking distance¹¹. Therefore, it is likely that the village playground is used primarily by the residents of the village.
- 5.25 As set out previously, Rusper has an ageing population, therefore, there is the potential for the use of the play area to decline. In addition, this may be exacerbated by the fact the Horsham Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review¹² projects a slight overprovision of facilities for children and young people in Rusper by 2037. An increase in children arising from the Proposed Development is likely to result in an increase in the use of the play space, which will help maintain its important place within the village.

⁶ Horsham District Council (2021) *District Wide Community Facilities Assessment Draft Report: February 2021*

⁷ Action with Communities in Rural England (2021). *The Impact of Covid-19 on Village and Community Halls in England*.

⁸ The Church of England (2023). *Statistics for Mission 2022*.

⁹ Horsham District Council (2019) *Playing Pitch Strategy*

¹⁰ Sport England (2023). *Active Lives Survey*

¹¹ Fields in Trust (2020). *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard*

¹² Horsham District Council (2021) *Open Space, Sport & Recreation Review*

- 5.26 Furthermore, the proposals include additional amenity greenspace, including a Local Area of Play (LAP). It is expected that this space will benefit both children living at the Proposed Development, and other children within the settlement. Given that children are not bound to use a single playground, often choosing the playground depending on what play equipment is available and whether it close to another activity e.g. on the way back from school, church or other village amenity, it is likely that both the existing and the proposed play spaces will be used by the new residents. This will provide a new high-quality play space and offer greater choice to children and young people within Rusper.

Emerging Services

- 5.27 The Proposed Development is situated within proximity (15 minute cycle / 4 minute drive) to Legal and General Homes' Land at North Horsham scheme which, when complete, will provide the following services:
- 500,000 sq. ft. of new employment space;
 - An education campus for Bohunt Horsham School; and
 - A new sports hub.
- 5.28 The proximity of the application site to this strategic development will enable residents of the Proposed Development, and indeed the wider Rusper community, to benefit from these services which are within easy reach via bicycle or within a short car journey.
- 5.29 The completion of the Land at North Horsham development will serve to further enhance the sustainability of the application site, whilst also supporting the enhanced use of existing services in Rusper by those using and residing at the strategic site.

Economic Benefits

Construction Phase

- 5.30 It is anticipated that the Proposed Development will bring economic benefits to the local area during the construction phase by creating temporary employment opportunities. Based on an anticipated 21-month build period, and a construction cost provided by the client, we have calculated that the construction would directly support an additional 53 temporary jobs¹³. Due to the relatively small scale of the proposals, it is assumed that the majority of these jobs would be sourced from the local workforce, therefore directly benefiting local residents.
- 5.31 Beyond the direct jobs generated by the construction phase, it is also expected that the Proposed Development would support net additional jobs due to downstream business benefits through the local supply chain and benefits created through additional income expenditure of employees. Based on the additionality formula as outlined in the Additionality Guide Fourth Edition¹⁴, we calculate that the construction of the Proposed Development will support an additional 26 indirect job through suppliers of construction materials and equipment.
- 5.32 Using the ONS Annual Business Survey¹⁵ ratio of turnover to gross value added (GVA) in the South East for construction, and dividing the expenditure equally over the 21-month build period (applying the HM Treasury's

¹³ We take a mid-point of two approaches; the first applies the average turnover per worker in the construction sector for the South East to the construction cost, which equates to 47 jobs. The second method assumes 30% of construction costs will be spent on labour and applies the average South East construction labour wages, which equates to 58 jobs.

¹⁴ Homes & Communities Agency (2014) Additionality Guide Fourth Edition

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023) Annual Business Survey 2021 results

recommended discounting of 3.5% to present values¹⁶), the construction period is forecast to generate a total of £3.5m GVA.

Operational Phase

- 5.33 An increase in residents in Rusper is expected to result in a greater need for local businesses and local expenditure, therefore providing economic benefits to the village.
- 5.34 A number of local commercial businesses are dispersed throughout the village. These include Maldini Cakes Horsham (wedding cake shop), RB Projects (building and services contractor), G4 Gardens (arborist and tree surgeon), Zetter Blunt Design (interior designer), Howicks Fencing & Landscapes (fence contractor). In addition, there are various businesses within close proximity of the village, including M2 Computing (IT support and services) and more.
- 5.35 Although the Proposed Development does not include employment uses and therefore does not directly support jobs, it is likely that the new residents will support jobs indirectly through additional spending in the local area. We have established that the Proposed Development will create around an additional £82k in convenience top-up expenditure and around an additional £163k in food and beverage expenditure in the local area. Using retail and leisure turnover per employee in the South East region and accounting for indirect taxation, new resident expenditure could create demand for up to an additional 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) retail jobs, and 2.6 FTE leisure jobs.
- 5.36 Considering a regional average GVA per head of £32,443¹⁷ over a standard 10-year period and applying the HM Treasury recommended present value discount of 3.5%, these forecast jobs are anticipated to generate a total operational GVA of up to £843k in the local area.
- 5.37 In addition to the above, households at the Proposed Development are expected to pay c. £90k in council tax per year (based on the 2023/24 charge for Band D properties in Rusper Parish). Assuming moving households will also spend c. £5k on new home products, we also anticipate that there will be a one-off spend of £215k, some of which is likely to be spent in the local area.
- 5.38 The affordable housing provision at the Proposed Development is also expected to have economic benefits for the local area. Housing affordability is considered to be an issue in the District, with an average house price of £437,227 (as of December 2023), compared to £377,162 in the wider South East region and £302,164 in England¹⁸. As of 2022, Horsham had a median affordability ratio of 13.18¹⁹, meaning on average, residents have to pay 13 times their annual salary for a house. By delivering 50% affordable housing, which is significantly in excess of both existing and emerging planning policy requirements, the Proposed Development would benefit the local area by making housing more accessible. As affordable housing typically attracts a younger demographic, this would ensure that new residents are of a younger age profile, therefore increasing the vitality of Rusper.
- 5.39 A summary of the economic benefits outlined above can be seen overleaf.

¹⁶ HM Treasury (2020) Green Book Review 2020: Findings and response

¹⁷ Office for National Statistics (2023) Regional gross value added (balanced) per head and income components

¹⁸ HM Land Registry (2024) UK House Price Index

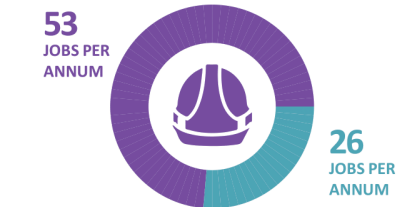
¹⁹ Office for National Statistics (2023) House price to workplace-based earnings ratio

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Both the NPPF and the adopted and emerging Local Policy highlight the role of residential development in supporting strong economic growth which in turn improves the vitality of settlements. There is recognition of the need to strengthen or maintain the vitality of rural economies in particular.
- 6.2 The current condition and planning use of the Site is not conducive to commercial uses and as such has struggled to be viable for employment uses over a significant period of time. The Council has been clear that the intensification of commercial uses on the Site is not acceptable due to amenity and highways concerns. The Site is not attractive in its current state to tenants, and it is not possible to increase its attractiveness (due to the financial investment involved to get the buildings up to a lettable condition and the planning use restrictions). This means that the continued use of the Site for employment uses is not viable.
- 6.3 Set against this negligible loss to existing employment opportunity, this Vitality Assessment has demonstrated how the proposal scheme for 43 no. new residential dwellings, of which a minimum of 50% will be affordable, can help maintain the vitality and viability of the Rusper Settlement.
- 6.4 The dwellings will appeal towards first-time buyers and young families and therefore it is expected that the Proposed Development will result in increased usership levels of local services and facilities.
- 6.5 We have evidenced that by introducing a new resident population, the Proposed Development is likely to increase the use of the local school, local retail and leisure services, community services and open spaces, thus ensuring that they have an adequate level of usership and funding to enable their continued operation.
- 6.6 The proposal to re-purpose the Site for residential use aligns with the directives of the NPPF as well as the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Rusper Neighbourhood Plan, by contributing to a strong rural economy which is competitive and vibrant. This assessment has demonstrated that the economic benefits gained by residential uses on the Site will outweigh the loss of employment opportunity.

LAND AT MILLFIELDS FARM , RUSPER

CONSTRUCTION BENEFITS:



- Direct Employment (jobs on-site, FTE per annum)
- Indirect Employment (accounting for regional additionality, FTE per annum)

Direct Employment

53 construction jobs on site per annum across the 21-year build period

Indirect Employment

26 indirect jobs per annum through the supply chain and induced through local spending over the 21-year build period (regional)

Note: Full-Time Equivalent, or 'FTE', is defined as the hours worked by one employee on a full-time basis, equating to one full-time job.



Economic Output
Construction economic output (GVA)

MARCH 2024

OPERATIONAL PHASE:



Additional Resident Spending

£1.5M additional resident household spending per annum, of which, £245K additional resident spending in local shops and services per annum



Economic Output
Operational economic output (GVA)

3 WORKERS



New Induced Service, Retail and Other Employment as a result of new resident spending, of which:

- 0.5 new retail jobs; and
- 2.6 new leisure service jobs.



One off spend on new home products

Estimated spend of £215K on home furnishings and other new home goods.



£90K

Additional Council Tax Revenue per annum

METHODOLOGY:

- Construction jobs calculated through regional turnover to employment ratio and average regional construction salary as a proportion of total construction costs
- Construction jobs refer to person years of employment (temporary jobs)
- Construction costs provided by client
- Construction GVA calculated through regional turnover to GVA ratio
- HCA Additionality Guide (4th Edition) used for indirect / induced multipliers
- Expenditure benefits derived from Experian household expenditure figures
- GVA derived from permanent employment multiplied by average regional GVA per head, discounted to net present value (GVA accumulation 'persistence factor' assumed for 10 years)
- Spend for new home produces assumes £5,000 per household
- Council tax based on 2023/24 Band D properties in Rusper Parish
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand/million for the ease of illustration

Appendix A: Marketing Brochure

FROM 2,314 SQ FT UP TO 12,583 SQ FT LOW COST FARM UNITS TO LET

GOOD ROAD LINKS TO THE A24 & A23/M23



FLEXIBLE IN AND OUT LETTING TERMS NORTH HORSHAM LOCATION WEST SUSSEX

Henry Adams HRR Ltd, 50 Carfax, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1BP
01403 282519 horsham@henryadams.co.uk henryadams.co.uk

Residential / **Commercial** / Rural / Development / Auctions

ACCOMMODATION (Gross Internal Floor Areas)



Building 1 (Timber Barn)

2,691 sq ft (250 sq m)



Building 2 (Low eaves timber barn)

2,314 sq ft (215 sq m)



Building 3 (Old Stables)

2,745 sq ft (255 sq m)



Building 4 (Steel framed warehouse)

12,583 sq ft (1,169 sq m)



ARTICULATED LORRIES / HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

Please note, this site is not suitable for articulated lorries or heavy good vehicles over 7.5 tons.

TERMS

The units are available for rent upon a simple tenancy agreement for a minimum term of 12 months. A rental deposit will be required. The tenancy agreement will be excluded from the Security of Tenure Provisions of the 1954 Landlord & Tenant Act (Part II).

RENTS

Building 1	£10,500 per annum exclusive
Building 2	£5,000 per annum exclusive
Building 3	£12,000 per annum exclusive
Building 4	£40,000 per annum exclusive

Rent is payable monthly in-advance by Standing Order.

BUSINESS RATES (2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Further details on request.

VIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

Through sole agents Henry Adams Commercial www.henryadams.co.uk/commercial

CONTACT

Andrew Algar - Head of Commercial property

01403 282 519

07868 434 449

andrew.algar@henryadams.co.uk



Building 4

Agent's Notice – We endeavour to make our particulars as accurate and reliable as possible. They are for guidance only and are intended to give a fair overall summary of the property. They do not form part of any contract or offer and should not be relied upon as a statement or representation of fact. Measurements, areas, plans and distances are approximate only. Photographs and computer-generated images show only certain parts and aspects of the property at the time they were taken or created. Neither Henry Adams HRR Limited nor any of its employees has any authority to make or give any representation or warranty whatsoever in relation to the property. No undertaking is given as to the structural condition of the property or any necessary consents or the operating ability or efficiency of any service system or appliance. Intending purchasers or lessees must satisfy themselves with regard to each of these points. Unless otherwise stated, all prices and rents are quoted exclusive of VAT. Any intending purchasers or lessees must satisfy themselves as to the incidence of VAT in respect of any transaction.

TO LET
WAREHOUSE (12,583 SQ FT)
& YARD (17,000 SQ FT)

GOOD ROAD LINKS TO THE A24 & A23/M23



MILLFIELDS FARM, HORSHAM ROAD
RUSPER, WEST SUSSEX RH12 4PR

Henry Adams HRR Ltd, 50 Carfax, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1BP
01403 282519 horsham@henryadams.co.uk henryadams.co.uk

Residential / **Commercial** / Rural / Development / Auctions

DESCRIPTION

Millfields Farm is located off Horsham Road, Rusper, which connects to the A264 (south), providing fast access to the A24, A23 and M23. Horsham is located approximately 4 miles to the immediate south. A location map is best viewed on-line through Google Maps by typing in the property's postcode RH12 4PR

DESCRIPTION

The subject unit is of a portal frame construction with corrugated cladding and roof with partial concrete walls. Externally, there is a yard area (formerly a sand school) measuring approximately 40m x 40m (1,600 sq m / 17,223 sq ft). The yard surface is made up compacted earth, sand, concrete and road planings.

AMENITIES

- Mains power available
- Sliding loading door - 3.3m (h) x 3.6m (w)
- 4.5m eaves height
- 7.0m apex height

ARTICULATED LORRIES / HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

Please note, this site is **not suitable** for articulated lorries or heavy good vehicles over 7.5 tons.

TERMS

The unit is available for rent upon a simple tenancy agreement for a term of 2 years. A rental deposit will be required. The tenancy agreement will be excluded from the Security of Tenure Provisions of the 1954 Landlord & Tenant Act (Part II).

RENT

£40,000 per annum exclusive, payable monthly in-advance by bank Standing Order.

BUSINESS RATES (2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR)

Further details on request.

VIEWING ARRANGEMENTS

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